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## State's first passive home to be erected in Claverack

By Francesca Olsen  
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

Published:  
Wednesday, July 7, 2010 4:50 PM EDT

Architect Dennis Wedlick was literally jumping up and down after the frame was raised on what will soon be the first certified passive house in New York State.

"We've been working on this for two years," he said. "Actually seeing it come together has been amazing."

Wedlick and his company, Dennis Wedlick Architect LLC, the Bill Stratton Building Company, members of Gabel Real Estate, and around 75 others saw it come together, too. The frame was raised Friday at noon, followed by a celebratory barbecue.

The house will be finished in three months, Wedlick said, and when it's done it will use less energy than the vast majority of homes in this country — 90 percent less heating energy than the typical three-bedroom home, to be exact.

If you're interested, it's for sale. It sits on six acres in Claverack on Millbrook Road, contributed to the project by the Sciamé Partnership. The secret to its energy savings is simple.

"This house is so well-built that it doesn't leak any air, any heat, any coolness," Wedlick said. There are no cracks or drafts and a "magic box," as Wedlick calls it, keeps air moving in and out.

"It is basically an air filter. It allows air to constantly change, all day long," Wedlick said. "Every other aspect of the house is old-fashioned, good home building."

Gregory Pedrick, Project Manager for Buildings Research at NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority), clarified that the "magic" in the box was "whole-house ventilation."

"The key is it moves the air very slowly," he said. The box is hidden in the ceiling between the first and second floor, Wedlick said, and filters out mold, pollen and pollution, keeping air not only circulated but clean.

It's also superinsulated, which prevents "thermal bridging," or the transfer of heat through materials. It's got highly-efficient south-facing windows that retain solar heat and a heat recovery ventilator that helps recover heat from the warmed air inside and transfers it to the new air coming from the outside; it does the opposite in the summer.

The energy savings are huge since so much heat is retained by the house's design and materials. "We've reduced the accidental ventilation and we've optimized the desired ventilation," Pedrick said.

Part of the house was paid for by a NYSERDA grant for all the building science and technology work, including computer modeling.

Pedrick said NYSERDA's role in the project started four years ago. "We wanted to do



The frame for New York State's first-ever passive house is raised on Millbrook Road in Claverack. (Francesca Olsen/Hudson-Catskill Newspapers)



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something that moved the traditional way of building energy efficient homes...higher" than wind power, geothermal or Energy Star appliances, he said.

NYSERDA solicited proposals from building science companies, asking the companies to tell them how new, efficient building techniques would affect the market.

"There's a disconnect," Pedrick said. "People don't realize the solutions can be fairly simple in housing."

Wedlick came to NYSERDA himself with an idea for a passive house.

"I plugged him in to one of those building science teams we hired," Pedrick said.

The Bill Stratton Building Company acted as builder/developer on the home, which is being built for sale (Pedrick said the next step for NYSERDA is retrofitting existing homes with whole house ventilation).

"We just have faith that there's the right Columbia County family out there that wants to live in this house," said Wedlick. "It's going to feel so connected to the land, and at the same time, it's a very private spot."

For more information e-mail [hudsonpassiveproject@denniswedlick.com](mailto:hudsonpassiveproject@denniswedlick.com), or visit [www.thegoodhome.com](http://www.thegoodhome.com), or [www.nyserda.org/advancedbuildings](http://www.nyserda.org/advancedbuildings).

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